

ago this week when the forces of freedom finally triumphed over tyranny.

In the days ahead, we will commemorate that victory, honor its heroes, and remember their sacrifice. But we will also celebrate more than the end of war. We will pay tribute to the triumph of peace. Through war in World War II, our people came together as never before. But after the war, they used their newfound sense of unity and common purpose at home and a sense of mission abroad to build for all of us 50 years of security, prosperity, and opportunity.

Today, we turn toward a new century, in a very different set of economic and political and social challenges. We now must draw on the legacy of those who won World War II and built peace and prosperity afterward to do our job to fulfill the spirit of that most remarkable of American generations. They understood the duty they owed to one another, to their communities, to their Nation, and to the world. After they won the war, they advanced the peace, the values, the liberties, and the opportunities that they fought and died to win.

Here on this island of peace that knows all too well the horror of war, let us vow to carry forward their legacy. The World War II generation taught us that when the American people find strength in their diversity and unity in a common purpose, when we stop arguing about our differences and start embracing what we have in common, nothing—nothing—can stop us. And so I say to you, if we apply the lessons that the World War II generation handed down to us to the challenges of the 21st century, nothing will stop us.

Thank you, and God bless you, and God bless America.

Thank you very much. And now, as we proceed with the program, I would like to introduce and call forward for some remarks my friend and colleague, your distinguished Governor, Governor Ben Cayetano.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:17 p.m. at Hickam Air Force Base. In his remarks, he referred to Robert May, World War II veteran and founder of the 11th Bomb Group Association; Gov. Benjamin J. Cayetano of Hawaii; Gen. John Lorber, USAF, Commander, Pacific Air Forces; Adm. Richard C. Macke, USN, Commander in

Chief, U.S. Pacific Command; and Mayor Jeremy Harris of Honolulu. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

### **Remarks at the Joint Service Review at Wheeler Army Airfield in Honolulu**

*September 1, 1995*

Thank you, General Weyand, for your wonderful remarks and, even more importantly, for your lifetime of service to the United States.

Governor Cayetano; Secretary Perry; Admiral Macke; Secretary Brown; General Shalikashvili; distinguished guests, especially our friends and as good a friends the veterans of the United States have ever had, Bob and Dolores Hope; the honored veterans of World War II; your families, your friends; ladies and gentlemen: As we gather to celebrate the end of a war that engulfed the world, I ask your leave to say a few words about recent developments in the prospects for peace in troubled Bosnia. Just a couple of hours ago, we were able to announce that the Foreign Ministers of Bosnia, Croatia, and Serbia have agreed to meet late next week in Geneva to try to reach agreement on the basic principles of a settlement for peace.

This is a positive step forward, but much remains to be done. Our own negotiating team will continue its work to bring the parties together. And as I said yesterday, no one should doubt NATO's resolve to prevent the further slaughter of innocent civilians in Sarajevo and the other safe areas in Bosnia.

I know that every American shares my pride in the skill and professionalism, the bravery, and the success of our pilots and crews and their NATO colleagues in the last few days. They are a shining example of the point that General Weyand just made.

Ladies and gentlemen, in this remarkable place, so much like Paradise, we recall when war made the idyllic Pacific hell on Earth. And we celebrate the generation of Americans who won that war and ensured the triumph of freedom over tyranny. Never before had the fight for freedom stretched across such a vast expanse of land and sea. And never before had the energies of the Amer-

ican people been so fully required or so fully joined.

At war, our people found a sense of mission in the world and shared purpose at home that became the bedrock for half a century of peace and prosperity. The World War II generation truly saved the world. Our security, our prosperity, our standing among other nations, all these are the legacy of the men and women, the heroes before us who we honor today.

Of course, today we can hardly imagine history taking a different turn. But when the Japanese Zeroes rounded those mountains and cut to pieces hundreds of aircraft here at Hickam and Kaneohe, when they then devastated the Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor, there was nothing inevitable about America's victory. As Asia fell to tyranny and fascism held sway from the Russian heartland all the way to the English Channel, free people everywhere must have stood in some doubt.

In the Philippines, our forces fought valiantly, making their final stand in Bataan and Corregidor. To this very day you can feel the memory of courage that hangs over the rock of Corregidor, as I had the privilege of doing last November when we commemorated the Pacific war in the Philippines. But the brave Filipino and American defenders could not hold out. After determined resistance, months of sickness and hunger, a massive artillery bombardment turned the sky to lead, and freedom's foothold there was lost.

President Roosevelt likened that time to the winter at Valley Forge, when our troops ran on courage and determination. Then, the enemy believed Americans would not sacrifice and fight on remote islands they had never heard of. But they were wrong.

Enlistment offices were flooded by American volunteers from our greatest cities and our smallest towns. Industry turned to military production. American consumption turned to rationing. And Americans turned to one another and found unity in the fight for freedom. Everyone pitched in, and together all across the country and all across the world, Americans got the job done.

Here in the Pacific, the long journey back to freedom began aboard the aircraft carrier *Hornet*. Four months after Pearl Harbor, an overloaded bomber lumbered down its flight

deck. The crew wondered then if it would fall into the sea. But slowly, it took flight. Fifteen other airplanes followed on a daring one-way trip to Tokyo and on to China. Colonel Jimmy Doolittle's famous bombing raid sent a clear message: America had not given up, and America was on the offensive.

Two months later, our combat pilots and code-breakers, including Japanese-American intelligence officers, labored valiantly but in silence throughout the entire war. These people came together at a place called Midway. There, in 5 minutes of furious air attack, a single bomber squadron rallied the enemy fleet and changed the course of the war.

But still, soldiers, sailors, aviators, and Marines confronted terrors they had never imagined: in the disease-ridden swamps of Guadalcanal; in the water that ran red with the blood of Marines coming ashore at Tarawa; in the frozen wastelands of Kiska and Attu; in the planes flying the treacherous route over the Hump; in submarines rocked by depth charges. But always they pushed forward: Into the skies over the Marianas, with barely enough fuel or daylight to fulfill the mission; in the seas off Leyte in the greatest naval battle of all time; from beachhead to beachhead on Guam, Saipan, and Tinian; and through the gunfire on Mount Suribachi, where the flag raising over Iwo Jima gave America its most stirring symbol of our common purpose and impending victory.

From beginning to end, the Americans who fought the Pacific war bestowed a glory upon our Nation with acts of heroism that will never be surpassed. On the very first day of the war, during the attack on Kaneohe Naval Base 40 miles from here, Lieutenant John Finn manned a machine gun out in the open. Constant bombing and strafing left him badly wounded. He went for first aid only when he was ordered to do so. And then, though he could hardly move, he helped to rearm returning American planes.

Three and a half years later on Okinawa, the last and bloodiest battle, an 18-year-old Navy corpsman named Robert Bush was giving plasma to a wounded officer. Artillery, machine gun and mortar fire rained all around him, and he stands here today. Under ferocious attack he stood his ground, he emptied his pistol and then a carbine to repel

the assault. He was blinded in one eye, but he continued holding the plasma, and he refused treatment for himself until the wounded officer was evacuated.

For their extraordinary service, John Finn and Robert Bush received the Congressional Medal of Honor. Today we recognize them and the other Medal of Honor winners who are here with us today. We ask them all to stand. [Applause] And now I would like to ask all the veterans of the Pacific war to stand and those who cannot stand, to raise their arms and be recognized so that we can express our appreciation to each of them. Please, gentlemen. [Applause]

To all of you and to your comrades who are watching at home on television and to the families of the more than 50,000 Americans who never came home from the Pacific, our Nation is forever grateful. We will never forget your fight for our freedom.

After the war and all you had endured, it was only natural that the World War II generation would turn your energies from the frontlines to the homefront. But thankfully, you did not turn your back on the world. Instead you helped to rebuild the devastated nations of Europe and Japan. And because you chose reconciliation over revenge, those who once were our enemies now are thriving democracies and strong friends.

Let me welcome all of those from other nations who have come here. And let me say especially how much the American people appreciate the recent powerful words of the Japanese Prime Minister, Mr. Murayama, when he expressed his nation's regret for its past aggression and its gratitude for the hand of reconciliation that this, the World War II generation, extended 50 years ago.

We owe the World War II generation our thanks because they also understood our Nation had a special role to play in continuing to preserve the peace and extending the reach of freedom. They forged the international institutions, the economic institutions, the United Nations, and NATO, that brought 50 years of security and prosperity to our Nation, to Europe, and to Japan. They kept our Armed Forces strong so that tyranny could never again run rampant, and they persevered in the cold war until the forces of freedom prevailed yet again.

Today, we continue to stand watch for freedom and to advance the cause of democracy across the Pacific, across the Atlantic, all around the globe. To meet that obligation and to preserve our own liberty, we must reaffirm our pledge to these fine men and women behind me and their counterparts throughout the world who bear today the responsibility that World War II's veterans shouldered so magnificently 50 years ago. So I say to you, you will always be the best trained, the best equipped, the best prepared fighting force in the world.

You represent the best of our country, our best hope for the future. And we know that for you and your children and your grandchildren, we must remain the strongest nation on Earth so that we can defeat the forces of darkness in our time and in the future, just as the veterans here defeated the force of tyranny 50 years ago.

Fifty years ago today, aboard a ship in Tokyo Bay, a Navy radioman penned this letter to his young son in Abilene, Texas. "When you grow a little older," he wrote, "you may think war to be a great adventure. Take it from me, it's the most horrible thing ever done by man."

Veterans of the Pacific, because you were willing to undergo the most horrible thing ever done by man, freedom is the order of the day in most of the world 50 years later.

Now it is for us to be true to your legacy of courage and devotion, to follow your lead in finding strength in America's diversity and unity in America's purpose. You worked together, and you never gave up. We must now preserve the liberty you won for us.

We say to you from the bottom of our heart, God bless you, and God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:30 a.m. at the reviewing stand. In his remarks, he referred to Gen. Fred Weyand, USA (Ret.), former Army Chief of Staff; and entertainer Bob Hope and his wife, Dolores. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

## Remarks to the Troops at Wheeler Army Airfield in Honolulu

September 1, 1995

**Audience member.** Go Razorbacks!